

**REPORT OF THE
NEW JERSEY CHARACTER EDUCATION
COMMISSION**

Submitted to Governor James E. McGreevey

September 30, 2002

Commission Chairs:

**Rev. Edwin D. Leahy
Dr. Moses William Howard
Ms. Maud Dahme
Dr. Clarence C. Hoover, III**

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Introduction

The need to focus public awareness on Character Education is a direct response to the growing evidence that our society is failing to prepare our youth to lead lives guided by core values and ethical principles. A national survey of high school students in 2001 revealed that 74 percent admit to having cheated on a test and many indicated that they did not see anything wrong with their behavior.¹ During this past year, America has seen extreme examples of greed, selfishness, deceit and self-aggrandizement by corporate leaders with serious consequences for individuals and the nation's economy. The media has been filled with exposes of blatant unethical and criminal conduct by the individuals responsible. In commenting on these scandals, an ethicist studying corporate behavior observed that there are clearly too many firms that find it "expedient to cheat" and encourage employees to cheat². If we teach our children that they should do whatever it takes to succeed in life, we are teaching them that the end justifies the means, a code of ethics which ignores the lessons of history and provides a fundamentally deficient model for what is needed to live meaningful lives in community with others.

Recognizing that our government requires that citizens exercise thoughtful choice and sound conduct to participate productively in civic and social life, Governor James E. McGreevey established the New Jersey Character Education Commission by Executive Order #9 on February 27, 2002 (see Appendix A). In the Executive Order, the Governor also recognized that the tragedy of September 11, 2001 has heightened the sensitivity of our nation and our state to our commonly held beliefs, and our willingness to be of service to others and thus demonstrate our capacity for virtues such as courage, empathy and altruism. The Governor charged the Commission to address the State of New Jersey's compelling interest in helping schools teach students the importance of good character traits such as integrity, fairness, respect and citizenship; create classroom

¹ Rutgers University study by Dr. Donald McCabe, reported in The Washington Times, "Nationwide poll finds high schoolers cheating," April 10, 2002.

² Dr. Philip Cochran quoted in the Philadelphia Inquirer, "Any white hats left in corporate America?" June 27, 2002.

environments that encourage students to respect one another while promoting effective learning; and teach students how to resolve conflicts without resorting to intimidation or violence.

The Commission shares Governor McGreevey's vision that the State has an important role in providing leadership in Character Education so that students throughout New Jersey can be involved in quality programs that recognize our common values and help them to become good citizens.

Defining Character Education

Children are not born with a moral compass, nor do they automatically grow up to behave ethically, with the common good in mind. Strong personal character and moral behavior come about as a result of a long process of socialization and education, during which adults demonstrate the values and ideals of family, community and society. Parents and the family are the first and most influential teachers of character, and religious and educational institutions have historically had moral and character development as a core mission as well. Private schools based on religious traditions may have a basis for providing guidance to their students in this regard. There is an urgent need, however, for educators to develop and implement programs that provide specific direction and leadership that engenders personal responsibility and respect for others among their students.

Character Education is a deliberate effort to develop values, attitudes, and behaviors that are essential for the individual and beneficial for society. As defined by Dr. Thomas Lickona, the 2002 recipient of the Character Education Partnership's prestigious "Sandy" award honoring his lifetime achievement in the field, the objective goodness of values is based on the fact that they:

- Affirm our human dignity;
- Promote the well being and happiness of the individual;
- Serve the common good;
- Define our right and obligations; and
- Meet the classical ethical tests of reversibility:

“Would you want to be treated this way?” and

“Would you want all persons to act this way in a similar situation?”

While developing good character is first and foremost a parental responsibility, it is also a community responsibility that must be shared with educational institutions, youth service groups, businesses, faith-based and community organizations. The greatest hope of parents is that their children will grow up to be kind, caring, honest, and successful adults. Teachers want to educate respectful and motivated students. Employers want to hire honest and productive workers. Everyone wants to live in a society composed of people with good character, people who are trustworthy. This is what Character Education is all about - providing members of society with the tools they need to help them become ethical, responsible members of society.

Character Education supports the belief that the social, ethical, and emotional development of young people is as important as their academic achievement. Advocates of Character Education believe that it is critical to create a safe, caring school environment that embraces both character development and promotes learning.

Current Status of Character Education in New Jersey

New Jersey was the first state in the nation to provide state aid funding for the purpose of implementing Character Education programs and services through the New Jersey Character Education Partnership initiative (NJCEP). The purpose of NJCEP is to assist public school educators to adopt validated Character Education programs that will meet the developmental needs of students throughout New Jersey by promoting pro-social student behaviors and creating a caring, disciplined school climate conducive to learning. A dedicated state aid line item in the Governor's Fiscal Year 2001 budget provided \$4.75 million to public school districts and approved charter schools to be devoted to Character Education program development and implementation during the 2000-01 school year. The initiative was included in the fiscal year 2002 and 2003 state budgets at the same funding level. While no government funding for this purpose could be directed to

nonpublic schools, nonpublic school educators have been able to share in the professional development and networking activities and other educational resources provided by the NJCEP.

According to the Department of Education's Report on Year One Outcomes³, 99 percent of New Jersey public school districts participated in this voluntary initiative. Approved charter schools, special services school districts, jointure commissions, and educational services commissions also participated at varying rates. District selection of Character Education programs was as follows: 59 percent of districts chose Programs of Merit recommended by the Department of Education, 11 percent selected alternative program providers, 18 percent developed their own homegrown programs, and 12 percent used a combination of program choices. A total of 658 schools, from 409 districts, plus 27 charter schools returned outcome forms, including 229 elementary schools with elementary grades only (K-5), 306 schools with middle grades (6-8), and 104 schools with grades in the 9-12 grade range. Those schools reported reaching 270,377 students with their Character Education initiatives.

Schools have appreciated the simplicity of the state-aid application process and the targeted yet flexible nature of the NJCEP, as well as the professional development, networking and support received through the initiative, and have reported accomplishing the following:

- Implementing Character Education programs that targeted many distinct areas of student behavior and student skills;
- Addressing the school as a factor in the Character Education equation by focusing on school climate and curriculum infusion; and
- Using many different means - some informal such as student feedback and others such as discipline records - to gauge the effectiveness of their programs.

In order to fulfill the promise of this substantial beginning in making Character Education part of the school culture, educators should renew their commitment to create and sustain caring, disciplined classrooms. Character Education supports the belief that the social, ethical, and emotional development of young people is as important as their academic achievement. Advocates of Character Education believe that it is critical to create a learning environment and practices that

³ New Jersey Character Education Partnership (NJCEP) Initiative: Report on Year One Outcomes, New Jersey Department of Education, May 2002. See the full report at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/chared/>.

embrace both character development and academic goals. Doing the work of Character Education means supporting intensive and ongoing contact between adults and children in families, school and community. This positive interaction is necessary to provide students with the skills they need to develop socially and emotionally. The rewards for taking this course will be seen in the young adults who leave New Jersey schools with sound character and the capability to contribute to the social as well as the economic goals that make our country strong.

Work of the Commission

The Governor's Executive Order called upon the New Jersey Character Education Commission (see the list of Commission members in Appendix B) to review best practices for Character Education and set forth options for communities and school districts to use in the development of their programs. The Commission convened initially in April 2002 and held five Commission meetings through September 2002. In the limited time available, the Commission members were exposed to a rich array of resources, materials and program examples.

The NJCEP initiative has already provided educators with an annotated directory listing over 125 Character Education programs and resources, which offers educators information to guide their program choices and to determine whether there may be a match for their needs⁴. It was beyond the feasible scope of the work of the Commission to evaluate or make considered judgments regarding the quality or effectiveness of specific programs or approaches. Instead, the Commission focused its efforts on gathering first hand accounts of what was working in New Jersey schools and providing recommendations to guide future Character Education development efforts at the state and local levels.

Public Hearings

In order to gather up-to-date information on current Character Education activities in New Jersey schools and hear directly from New Jersey citizens regarding their views on the state's role in promoting Character Education, the Commission held five public hearings. The hearings were scheduled in May and June 2002 and were publicized through:

⁴ Character Education Program Resources Profile Directory (July 2001) New Jersey State Department of Education. Available at www.state.nj.us/njded/chared.

- Information disseminated through statewide professional organizations;
- Press coverage, which began with a press release from Commissioner of Education Dr. William L. Librera; and
- Information posted on the Department of Education's Character Education Website (<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/chared/>).

The hearings were conducted in the evening at the following dates and locations:

- ✓ May 22, Avenel Middle School, Avenel, N.J.;
- ✓ May 28, Board Room, Vineland Public Schools, Vineland, N.J.;
- ✓ May 29, St. Benedict's Prep, Newark, N.J.
- ✓ June 3, Atlantic City High School, Atlantic City, NJ; and
- ✓ June 6, Frelinghuysen Middle School, Morristown, N.J.

The hearing process was designed to allow for an equitable presentation opportunity for everyone who attended, using a formal but open format in which all those presenting testimony could share whatever was on their minds and express what was in their hearts. The public was asked to bring written testimony, if possible, and address the attending Commission members for no more than five minutes. Following a standard introduction read by the Commission member serving as chairperson for each site, the Commission heard from Character Education program and subject matter experts, school personnel, parents, students and citizens from around the state. One hundred nineteen people attended the five sessions, and 61 people testified.

Selected Testimony from the Public Hearings

The following is a portrait of the central themes that emerged from the hearings, using excerpts from the submitted testimony:

Theme: Support for and the Impact of Character Education on Students and

School Climate

- Our program has seen a dramatic change in the school climate as a result of our Character Education efforts, which has had a positive impact on the learning environment as well.
- Our program strongly supports the infusion of Character Education into academic subjects. (This was a recurrent theme.)
- The goal of our Character Education program was to reduce bullying, and to increase tolerance and respect of others. Ours is a proactive program that encourages youth to prevent violence from the beginning, engages students in activities that teach them how to develop leadership and character, helping them understand the importance of standing up for what is right, and neutralizes negative peer pressure.
- The tenets of our program include: fostering respect by encouraging global cooperation and harmony; promoting greater understanding between youth and adults; providing opportunities for making decisions; assuming responsibility and being accountable for the outcome; and encouraging democracy and fairness through cooperative education in the home and community.
- Some anticipated outcomes of our program are improved behavior/discipline, conflict resolution and teamwork/cooperative skills, and the reduced likelihood of problem behaviors. Our program is already underway and we feel when the program has been widely incorporated throughout grades K- 12 we will have a model of a Character Education program that may be significant for other urban school districts to replicate.
- Character Education is an integral ingredient in creating safe schools.
- Character Education should be infused into all aspects of school life in every building in the district.
- Professional development and training are important to the quality of program implementation, as is the need to assess Character Education programs.
- The key starting point has been to build a common language for staff and students through techniques that reflect Character Education language and principles on a daily basis. Thus

far, the feedback from school staff has been very positive, and teachers have noted visible changes in student behavior.

Theme: Parents' Perspectives on Character Education

- Parents are eager for Character Education. While parents are the first source of Character Education, they need assistance from schools to support and reinforce what they try to teach at home.
- Parents are looking for support programs to help them cope with children who are pulling away from sound values and behaviors as a result of peer pressure.
- The Commission was urged to consider encouraging schools to offer incentives for student involvement in community service in addition to recognizing that participation could help them later on in life (for example, college admission).
- Character Education should include input from parents and members of community organizations.
- It is important for the Character Education initiative to continue to address the social/emotional aspects of development as well as academic achievement.

Theme: Program Support and Continued Funding

- Our district strongly supports a continued funding process similar to the first two state aid cycles.
- We strongly encourage funding for the State Character Education initiative to be continued. Funding allows districts to implement effective prevention programs that give children the skills to be successful in school, their personal lives, their careers and their communities.
- Continuing funding will allow programs to mature to their full potential.
- Continue the original four-year commitment and assess what is further needed to allow districts the time, resources and support they need to fully institutionalize Character Education into the every day lives of students in New Jersey.
- We highly support continued funding to expand on-going activities and services.

Theme: Using Consultant Organizations to Implement Character Education Programs

- Consultants helped by providing brochures on Character Education programs and a report on how their program fit into the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- Consultants provided highly regarded training for the successful implementation of Character Education Programs designed for youth in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for Character Education to succeed, parents, community members, and educators must model good character, treat our youth with dignity and respect, encourage right behaviors and develop procedures that address wrongful actions. In turn, youth are expected to internalize and implement good behaviors in order to ensure a climate of civility. In discussing the results of the public hearings and the background information presented by Department of Education staff and Commission members, there was consensus that Character Education is not a subject to be taught in isolation. Character Education is a process that creates a caring and safe school environment by infusing it throughout the curriculum, establishing a caring classroom and community by modeling democratic principles, using cooperative learning strategies, adopting anti-bullying and conflict resolution policies and providing time to reflect on values and good behaviors.

The following recommendations address the need for reaffirming and instilling our collective values in an increasingly complex world. The recognition of and support for Character Education has increased significantly in the last decade due, in part, to events of recent years. We have witnessed an incomprehensible spate of violence that has claimed the lives of children and adults across the country, including but not limited to the events at Columbine High School and the terror attacks on September 11, 2001. Our public schools are now being held accountable for creating and maintaining safe school environments and striving to eliminate destructive and divisive acts of bullying, harassment or bias⁵.

All of this makes us aware of how urgently our young people need training in civil and ethical conduct. The Commission believes that Character Education offers the present and future generations the gift of a civil society, and that making quality Character Education available to all school children is the first and most important step towards corrective and preventive measures within the children's environment.

⁵ See, for example, N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5, the School Safety subchapter in the Programs to Support Student Development regulations adopted by the State Board of Education in 2001.

The Commission's eleven recommendations for refinement and expansion of the New Jersey Character Education Partnership initiative have been organized into five categories:

1. Promoting Character Education in Families, Schools and Communities;
2. Developing School Programs and Curriculum;
3. Setting Best Practice Standards;
4. Providing Technical Assistance, Training and Evaluation Support; and
5. Maintaining State Guidance and Oversight.

1. Promoting Character Education in Families, Schools and Communities

- 1.1 Local government and other institutions that have a responsibility to foster youth development, should actively engage their community in the development of Character Education by making it part of their ongoing mission and by building a framework that requires continuous involvement of the broader community.**

In order for Character Education to succeed, parents, community members, and educators must model good character, treat youth with dignity and respect, encourage right behaviors and develop procedures that address wrongful actions. In turn, youth are expected to internalize and implement good behaviors in order to ensure a climate of civility. Some municipalities have established representative task forces or committees to gather support for local Character Education initiatives. These efforts have shown success in broadening the policy and program development context for Character Education beyond the schools (see the example in Appendix D).

- 1.2 The New Jersey Character Education Partnership (NJCEP) initiative should be continued using the current state aid formula and application structure to provide for continued support to expand Character Education programs and services to all public school students.**

It was the opinion of individual Commission members and of many who offered testimony during the Commission's public hearings that the NJCEP initiative was of great assistance in establishing new programs and expanding effective ones. The initiative was well received by school administrators and staff as well because it was voluntary, featured simple, efficient and accountable procedures for disseminating funds to the schools, and allowed for the necessary flexibility for school districts to choose programs that fit their local environments rather than implement a single statewide program. The Department of Education should continue to administer the program in this manner, refine the system for evaluating program and service outcomes and assist school districts in identifying and accessing other potential funding sources to support and expand the program.

2. Developing School Programs and Curriculum

2.1 All New Jersey students should receive Character Education of an intensity, duration, and breadth that is necessary to build targeted skills and form positive social behaviors.

The NJCEP initiative reached more than 270,000 students during its first year. We remain concerned that more than one-half of public school students have not yet benefited from participation in the program. Additionally, although no funds were provided for nonpublic schools and no data were collected from them, the NJCEP initiative should reach out to the nonpublic educators of the approximately 224,000 students served by these schools. The Commission recommends that in future directions to school districts participating in the NJCEP initiative, the Department of Education should consider requesting that school officials explore ways to include nonpublic school students in activities or programs where feasible.

The Commission is further concerned that not all students touched by the initiative received the same quality of programs and services since the standards for program effectiveness nationally and in New Jersey are still in the process of being determined and defined. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the purpose of Character Education is not mainly didactic, that the goal should be to provide children with the tools and skills they need to help them become ethical, responsible members of society.

2.2 Comprehensive school-based Character Education should be carefully planned by a committee with broad stakeholder representation, utilize the “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education” of the national Character Education Partnership as a guide (see Appendix C), be based on agreed upon core ethical values, be integrated into the fabric and daily activities of school life and be evaluated for its effectiveness.

The Commission recognizes that Character Education is not a subject to be taught in isolation. Character Education is a process that creates a caring and safe school environment by infusing the teaching of core ethical values throughout the curriculum; establishing a caring classroom

and community by modeling democratic principles and using cooperative learning strategies; developing a student code of conduct based on these values as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-5.1; adopting anti-bullying and conflict resolution policies and programs; and providing time to reflect on values and good behaviors. The Commission believes the “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education” are a useful framework for providing guidance to school officials in developing and refining their initiatives.

The school building principal should assign lead responsibility for coordinating Character Education and related programs to a point person or committee to facilitate their preparation and training to fill this role within the school.

2.3. Educational leaders should consider Character Education as an essential component when planning school reform efforts.

The Commission recognized the pressures on school officials and teachers to meet the demands of the Core Curriculum Content Standards and related assessments. In this context, it is important to emphasize that Character Education should be considered as a balance to the necessary focus on academic skills. Indeed, there is a convincing body of research concluding that attention to the development of social and emotional competencies in both teachers and students is integral to the creation of a learning environment that supports the achievement of academic goals.

3. Setting Best Practice Standards

- 3.1 The New Jersey Department of Education should continue and expand its provision of information and guidance to educators and community leaders regarding the best local, state and nationally validated Character Education programs.**

The Character Education Program Resources Profile Directory disseminated by the Department of Education has proved to be a valuable tool in assisting schools to review and select among available vendors of quality Character Education programs. This document should continue to be developed and refined. The Department of Education should review recent national studies of validated and research-based programs and consider providing additional guidance to districts in selecting among many available programs.

- 3.2 The New Jersey Department of Education should continue to highlight and disseminate best practices in Character Education through its curriculum standards and frameworks, and through its Star Schools/Best Practices and Service Learning Leader Schools awards programs.**

Providing opportunities for schools, educators and students to be recognized for high quality programs and services, especially through the peer review process, is an important means to set practice standards, provide examples from which others can learn, and motivate participants to evaluate and report on their efforts.

4. Providing Technical Assistance, Training and Evaluation Support

4.1 A New Jersey Center for Character Education should be established at a state college or university to assist all public and nonpublic schools and communities by providing technical assistance for program development, training and evaluation.

As the New Jersey initiative to infuse Character Education continues to broaden and grow, it is increasingly important to provide the tools, expertise and assistance to support those responsible for organizing and implementing programs and services. Three primary tasks for which technical assistance is necessary are:

- 1) Evaluation of program progress and assessment of results;
- 2) Cross-fertilization of what works between schools and communities throughout the state;
and
- 3) Professional development and skill enhancement.

School districts and communities cannot be expected to, nor should they, perform these tasks in isolation.

New Jersey should create a Center for Character Education in a state college or university to assist schools and communities with these tasks. The Department of Education has applied for a four-year award under the U.S. Department of Education's Partnerships in Character Education grant program, which could help to support the establishment of the proposed Center. Philanthropic or private sector support for the Center should be sought as well to enhance its capacity to serve local communities and schools.

4.2 The Department of Education should continue to expand the use of its Website and other electronic means to provide state-of-the-art information, research, and professional development opportunities.

Working in cooperation with the proposed New Jersey Center for Character Education, the Department of Education should expand and enhance its Website and explore the use of

enhanced electronic communication vehicles, such as the Virtual Academy (online at <http://www.njpep.org/>), a new means of providing enriched avenues for information sharing, networking successful program strategies and providing professional development opportunities.

4.3 The New Jersey Department of Education should foster linkages and partnerships with and between institutions of higher education and local schools and communities to meet the need to prepare personnel at all levels to implement Character Education programs and services effectively.

While acknowledging that research-based programs have been developed by New Jersey's institutions of higher education not enough has been done to draw on the resources and creativity of higher education, to assist communities and schools in implementing Character Education programs and providing high quality professional development opportunities. The Department of Education should work in cooperation with the proposed New Jersey Center for Character Education to establish short and long-range plans to effectively engage higher education to meet this need.

5. Maintaining State Guidance and Oversight

5.1 The New Jersey Character Education Commission should be reconstituted to serve as an advisory body to the Governor and Commissioner of Education for the purpose of reviewing and reporting annually on the progress made in implementing effective Character Education programs in New Jersey schools and communities and providing guidance and further recommendations where necessary.

The Governor's Executive Order establishing the Commission indicates that, "...the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to provide leadership for a statewide effort on Character Education..." The Commission believes that, given the time constraints imposed upon its deliberations, the depth and complexity of the Character Education programs that it has documented are already underway, and the uniform support for increased efforts it has heard from the public, the State would be well served if the Commission's mandate would be extended to enable it to provide a public forum for promoting the importance of Character Education and a source of independent review and recommendations for future directions.

These recommendations should be construed as a beginning, not as an end. The Commission believes that parents, community groups, students, non-profit organizations, faith-based institutions and the business community must contribute to the discussion and the process. All the citizens in this state stand to gain from efforts to improve our children's character, to improve what they are learning about character within the comprehensive educational environment, and to offer authentic opportunities that foster their ability to develop into ethical members of a global society. Indeed everyone must become a part of the process to ensure the existence of a civil society. These recommendations provide the basis for discussion around the state, and the foundation for educationally sound decision making to occur. It is the Commission's belief that a focus on the implementation of widely shared, pivotally important core ethical values will create a legacy of societal civility.

APPENDICES

- A. Governor's Executive Order # 9
- B. List of Commission Members
- C. Eleven Principles of Character Education
- D. Community Organizing Framework

APPENDIX A

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 9 **Character Education Commission**

WHEREAS, parents, teachers, and leaders from business, faith-based and other community organizations in New Jersey all have an important role in ensuring that our children receive a quality education in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning; and

WHEREAS, developing good character in our young people is essential to providing a safe and productive school environment; and

WHEREAS, the events of September 11th have heightened the sensitivity of our nation and our state, causing citizens to give greater consideration to common beliefs, character virtues, and service to others; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to provide leadership for a statewide effort on character education so that students throughout the State can be involved in programs that recognize our common values and help them to become good citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to help schools create classroom environments that promote effective learning and encourage students to respect one another; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to help schools teach students the importance of good character traits such as integrity, fairness, respect, and citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to teach students how to solve conflicts without resorting to intimidation or violence, and to avoid the dangers of drugs and alcohol; and

WHEREAS, nationwide research demonstrates that successful character education programs are based on values determined by the local community and transmitted through incorporation into existing curriculum; and

WHEREAS, research demonstrates that the provision of meaningful character education programs that incorporate common values, conflict resolution, and service to others can best be

achieved by involving parents and communities in such efforts along with the school community; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has a compelling interest to gather information on best practices and principles that define good character education programs; and

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey desires to build upon existing programs and efforts currently being undertaken by schools in this state.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JAMES E. MC GREEVEY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. There is hereby established The New Jersey Character Education Commission.
2. The Commission shall be co-chaired by Father Edwin Leahy, Headmaster of St. Benedict's Preparatory School; Dr. Moses William Howard, Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church; Maud Dahme, President of the New Jersey State Board of Education; and Clarence Hoover, Superintendent of the Vineland Public Schools. Other members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Governor, with representation from faith-based organizations, community and service organizations, parents, and education leaders throughout the State.
3. The Commission shall begin meeting in March 2002 and shall report to the Governor on or before September 30, 2002.
4. The Commission shall review best practices for character education and shall set forth options for communities and school districts to undertake the development of community-based character education programs.
5. In its recommendations, the Commission shall consider programs that:
 - a. Teach students the importance of character traits such as integrity, fairness, respect, responsibility, and citizenship
 - b. Incorporate character education through the existing curriculum
 - c. Create schools that are safe
 - d. Create classroom environments that promote effective learning and encourage students to respect one another
 - e. Teach students how to solve conflicts fairly and respectfully without resorting to intimidation or violence

- f. Develop leadership skills and offer students opportunities to serve others
 - g. Engage parents and the entire community in cooperative efforts to build and model good character.
- 6. The Commission shall be staffed by personnel from the Department of Education.
- 7. The Commission is authorized to call upon any department, office, or agency of State government to provide such information, resources or other assistance deemed necessary to discharge its responsibilities under this Order. Each department, officer, division and agency of this State is required to cooperate with the Commission and to furnish it with such information and assistance as is necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Order.
- 8. The meetings of this Commission shall be publicly advertised throughout the State of New Jersey and shall be open to the public so as to allow for input from the community.
- 9. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this 27th day of February in the Year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Two, and the Independence of the United States, the Two Hundred and Twenty-Sixth.

/s/ JAMES E. MCGREEVEY

Governor

[seal]

Attest:

/s/ PAUL A. LEVINSOHN

Chief Counsel to the Governor

APPENDIX B

New Jersey Character Education Commission List of Members

***Rev. Edwin D. Leahy O.S.B Co-chair, Headmaster, St. Benedict's Preparatory School,
Newark, NJ***

Dr. Moses William Howard, Co-chair, Pastor, Bethany Baptist Church, Newark, NJ

Maud Dahme, Co-chair, President, NJ State Board of Education, Trenton, NJ

Dr. Clarence C. Hoover III, Co-chair, Superintendent, Vineland Public Schools

Joanne Adams, Director, Lawrenceville School Community Service Program, Lawrenceville, NJ

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Clabon Bogan, Jr., Pastor, 1st Baptist Church, Deptford, NJ

Bob Bonazzi, Executive Director, NJEA, Trenton, NJ

Modia Butler, Director, Do Something NJ, Newark, NJ

Dr. Anna DeMolli, Assistant Superintendent, Paterson School District, Paterson, NJ

Dr. Maurice Elias, Professor of Psychology, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

John H. Ewing, Senator (Retired) Bedminster, NJ

Lynne D. Feldman, Esq., Northern Highlands Regional High School, Allendale, NJ

***Kristia Greenberg, School Counselor, Bridgewater-Raritan's Hillside Intermediate School,
Bridgewater, NJ***

Yolanda Gutierrez, Teacher, Vineland, NJ

Pat Keefe, Associate General Counsel, Elizabethtown Gas, Union, NJ

Ralph Larsen, CEO, Johnson & Johnson, New Brunswick, NJ

Murray Laulicht, Pitney, Hardin, Kipp & Szuch, Morristown, NJ

Dr. Donald L. McCabe, Professor of Management, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ

Dr. Howard McGary, Professor of Philosophy, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

***Patricia Osborne, Councilwoman, Township of Woodbridge/Supervisor Woodbridge Township
School District, Iselin, NJ***

Ron Riccio, Professor, Seton Hall Law School, Newark, NJ

Lois Rotella, Asst. Superintendent of Schools, Woodbridge Township Schools, Woodbridge, NJ

Dr. Joann Susko, Principal, Dag Hammarskjold Middle School, East Brunswick, NJ

Rabbi Yaakov Wasser, Rabbi, Young Israel of East Brunswick-- East Brunswick, NJ

Rabbi Moshe Zev Weisberg, Lakewood, NJ

Charles Wowkanech, President, NJ State AFL-CIO, Trenton, NJ

Commission Staff

New Jersey Department of Education:

Gloria Hancock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Commissioner

Patricia Guazzelli, Character Education Team Leader

Nyeema C. Watson, Education Program Development Specialist

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APPENDIX C

Character Education Partnership 11 Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education™

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There is no single script for effective character education, but there are some important basic principles. The following eleven principles serve as criteria that schools and other groups can use to plan a character education effort and to evaluate available character education programs, books, and curriculum resources.

Principle 1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

Character education holds, as a starting philosophical principle, that there are widely shared, pivotally important core ethical values – such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others – that form the basis of good character. A school committed to character education explicitly names and publicly stands for these values; promulgates them to all members of the school community; defines them in terms of behaviors that can be observed in the life of the school; models these values; studies and discusses them; uses them as the basis of human relations in the school; celebrates their manifestations in the school and community; and upholds them by making all school members accountable to standards of conduct consistent with the core values.

In a school committed to developing character, these core values are treated as a matter of obligation, as having a claim on the conscience of the individual and community. Character education asserts that the validity of these values, and our obligation to uphold them, derive from the fact that such values affirm our human dignity; they promote the development and welfare of the individual person; they serve the common good; they meet the classical tests of reversibility (Would you want to be treated this way?) and universality (Would you want all persons to act this way in a similar situation?); and they define our rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. The school makes clear that these basic human values transcend religious and cultural differences and express our common humanity.

Principle 2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

In an effective character education program, character is broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of the moral life. *Good character consists of understanding, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values.* The task of character education therefore is to help students and all other members of the learning community know "the good," value it, and act upon it. As people grow in their character, they will develop an increasingly refined understanding of the core values, a deeper commitment to living according to those values, and a stronger tendency to behave in accordance with those values.

Principle 3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

Schools committed to character education look at themselves through a moral lens and see how virtually everything that goes on in school affects the values and character of students. An *intentional* and *proactive* approach plans deliberate ways to develop character, rather than simply waiting for opportunities to occur. A comprehensive approach uses all aspects of schooling-- the teachers example, the discipline policy, the academic curriculum (including the drug, alcohol, and sex education curriculum), the instructional process, the assessment of learning, the management of the school environment, relationships with parents, sports and physical education programs and so on-- as opportunities for character development. "Stand alone" character education programs can be useful first steps or helpful elements of an

ongoing effort but must not be considered a substitute for a holistic approach that integrates character development into every aspect of school life.

Principle 4. The school must be a caring community.

The school itself must embody good character. It must progress toward becoming a microcosm of the civil, caring, and just society we seek to create as a nation. The school can do this by becoming a moral community that helps students form caring attachments to adults and to each other. These caring relationships will foster both the desire to learn and the desire to be a good person. All children and adolescents have a need to belong, and they are more likely to internalize the values and expectations of groups that meet this need. The daily life of classrooms, as well as all other parts of the school environment (e.g., the corridors, cafeteria, playground, and school bus), must be imbued with core values such as concern and respect for others, responsibility, kindness, and fairness.

Principle 5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.

In the ethical as in the intellectual domain, students are constructive learners; they learn best by doing. To develop good character, they need many and varied opportunities to apply values such as responsibility and fairness in everyday interactions and discussions. By grappling with real-life challenges-- how to divide the labor in a cooperative learning group, how to reach consensus in a class meeting, how to carry out a service learning project, how to reduce fights on the playground-- students develop practical understanding of the requirements of fairness, cooperation, and respect. Through repeated moral experiences, students can also develop and practice the moral skills and behavioral habits that make up the action side of character.

Principle 6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.

Character education and academic learning must not be conceived as separate spheres; rather there must be a strong, mutually supportive relationship. In a caring classroom and school where students feel liked and respected by their teachers and fellow students, students are more likely to work hard and achieve. Reciprocally, when students are enabled to succeed at the work of school, they are more likely to feel valued and cared about as persons.

Because students come to school with diverse skills, interests and needs, a curriculum that helps all students succeed will be one whose content and pedagogy are sophisticated enough to engage all learners. That means moving beyond a skill-and-drill, paper-and-pencil curriculum to one that is inherently interesting and meaningful for students. A character education school makes effective use of active teaching and learning methods such as cooperative learning, problem-solving approaches, experience-based projects, and the like. One of the most authentic ways to respect children is to respect the way they learn.

Principle 7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

As students develop good character, they develop a stronger inner commitment to doing what their moral judgment tells them is right. Schools, especially in their approach to discipline, should strive to develop this intrinsic commitment to core values. They should minimize reliance on extrinsic rewards and punishments that distract students' attention from the real reasons to behave responsibly: the rights and needs of self and others. Responses to rule-breaking should give students opportunities for restitution and foster the students' understanding of the rules and willingness to abide by them in the future.

Similarly, within the academic curriculum, intrinsic motivation should be fostered in every way possible. This can be done by helping students experience the challenge and interest of subject matter, the desire to work collaboratively with other students, and the fulfillment of making a positive difference in another person's life or in their school or community.

Principle 8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the

education of students.

Three things need attention here. First, all school staff – teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches, secretaries, cafeteria workers, playground aides, bus drivers – must be involved in learning about, discussing, and taking ownership of the character education effort. All of these adults must model the core values in their own behavior and take advantage of the other opportunities they have to influence the character of the students with whom they come into contact.

Second, the same values and norms that govern the life of students must govern the collective life of the adult members of the school community. If students are to be treated as constructive learners, so must adults. They must have extended staff development and many opportunities to observe and then try out ways of integrating character education practices into their work with students. If students are given opportunities to work collaboratively and participate in decision-making that improves classrooms and school, so must adults. If a school's staff members do not experience mutual respect, fairness, and cooperation in their adult relationships, they are less likely to be committed to teaching those values to students.

Third, the school must find and protect time for staff reflection on moral matters. School staff, through faculty meetings and smaller support groups, should be regularly asking: What positive, character-building experiences is the school already *providing* for its students? What negative moral experiences (e.g., peer cruelty, student cheating, adult disrespect of students, littering of the grounds) is the school currently *failing to address*? And what important moral experiences (e.g. cooperative learning, school and community service, opportunities to learn about and interact with people from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds) is the school now *omitting*? What school practices are at odds with its professed core values and desire to develop a caring school community? *Reflection of this nature is an indispensable condition for developing the moral life of a school.*

Principle 9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.

For character education to meet the criteria outlined thus far, there must be leaders (a principal, another administrator, a lead teacher) who champion the effort and, at least initially, a character education committee (or several such support groups, each focused on a particular aspect of the character effort) with responsibility for long-range planning and program implementation. Over time, the functions of this committee may be taken on by the school's regular governing bodies. Students should also be brought into roles of moral leadership through student government, peer conflict mediation programs, cross-age tutoring, and the like.

Principle 10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

A school's character education mission statement should state explicitly what is true: Parents are the first and most important moral educators of their children. Next, the school should take pains at every stage to communicate with parents about the school's goals and activities regarding character development – and how families can help. To build trust between home and school, parents should be represented on the character leadership committee that does the planning, the school should actively reach out to "disconnected" subgroups of parents, and all parents need to be informed about – and have a chance to react and consent to – the school's proposed core values and how the school proposes to try to teach them. Finally, schools and families will enhance the effectiveness of their partnership if they recruit the help of the wider community – businesses, religious institutions, youth organizations, the government, and the media – in promoting the core ethical values.

Principle 11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Effective character education must include an effort to assess progress. Three broad kinds of outcomes merit attention:

(a) The character of the school: To what extent is the school becoming a more caring community? This can be assessed, for example, with surveys that ask students to indicate the extent to which they agree with statements such as,

"Students in this school [classroom] respect and care about each other," and "This school [classroom] is like a family."

(b) The school staff's growth as character educators: To what extent have adult staff-- teaching faculty, administrators, and support personnel-- developed understandings of what they can do to foster character development? Personal commitment to doing so? Skills to carry it out? Consistent habits of acting upon their developing capacities as character educators?

(c) Student character: To what extent do students manifest understanding of, commitment to, and action upon the core ethical values? Schools can, for example, gather data on various character-related behaviors: Has student attendance gone up? Fights and suspensions gone down? Vandalism declined? Drug incidents diminished?

Schools can also assess the three domains of character (knowing, feeling, and behaving) through anonymous questionnaires that measure student moral judgment (for example, "Is cheating on a test wrong?"), moral commitment ("Would you cheat if you were sure you wouldn't get caught?") and self-reported moral behavior ("How many times have you cheated on a test or major assignment in the past year?"). Such questionnaires can be administered at the beginning of a school's character initiative to get a baseline and again at later points to assess progress.

APPENDIX D

Community Organizing Framework

In order for character education to succeed, parents, community members, and educators must model good character, treat our youth with dignity and respect, encourage right behaviors and develop procedures that address wrongful actions. In turn, youth are expected to internalize and implement good behaviors in order to ensure a climate of civility. The following is a suggested model that embeds character education throughout the community.

1. Structure

Establish a Municipal or Township Community Character Education Commission with primary leadership from the public schools and local government officials. Membership on the commission should also include representatives from:

- Faith-based institutions,
- Service organizations,
- Youth and recreation groups,
- The business community
- and citizens.

School representation should include at least one school board member and students, as well as school district administrators and staff. Municipal representation should include a staff or committee chair responsible for youth recreation activities and programs.

2. Function

The purpose of the commission is to coordinate, support and enable the infusion of character education throughout the endeavors of the organizations and existing programs. For example, youth and recreation group partners can encourage good sportsmanship among fans, coaches and teams at all events. School and community publications can be embellished with words of good character. Municipal agencies could coordinate community calendars in order to avoid conflicts with back to school night. The business community could publicize the importance of a good work ethic, good attendance, and community volunteerism. The following is an example of the mission and belief statements that could be considered for a local municipal or township commission:

Mission Statement

The future of our Democratic society is dependent on the ability of each new generation of citizens to become active participants in the political, economic and social institutions of our nation. It is the mission of the _____ Character Education Commission to ensure that the youth of our community are equipped with the ethical values and academic experiences that will allow them to become active, responsible and caring citizens of good character.

Belief Statements

The _____ Character Education Commission strongly supports the following beliefs:

The future of our community rests squarely in the hands of our youth.

- The adults of our community, who are responsible to teach and model core ethical values, play a critical role in ensuring the well-being and healthy development of our youth.
- It is the responsibility of the adults of our community to provide our youth with opportunities that will encourage success in school and promote and support the development of positive character traits, healthy life styles and leadership skills.
- It is the responsibility of both the community and the _____ School District to provide an environment that nurtures and promotes the development of good character among our youth.

3. Program Ideas

In addition to infusing character education into existing organizational plans and functions, the commission can be the source for initiating new programs and activities with character education themes and underpinnings. Examples of activities New Jersey communities have tried include:

- Surveying both adults and student regarding which values and virtues should be the core ethical values for the focus of policies, programs, and activities.
- Starting a youth advisory committee to the municipal recreation advisory body.
- Convening a healthy communities / healthy youth summit.
- Linking with nationally validated youth and community development models such as Caring Communities, The Search Institute and the Laws of Life contest of the John Templeton Foundation.

